

canal were such as to give a reasonably good prospect of rendering the men quickly fit for general service, operation was advised in men over thirty or with old-standing hernias of considerable size. It will be seen that the careful preliminary examination of the inguinal canal in these doubtful cases was of the greatest importance. Nearly every kind and degree of hernia was seen among those admitted. There were a fair number of recurrent cases, nearly all of which had been operated upon a few months previously in home hospitals, either shortly before, or just after, joining the army. The recurrence was in each case either of the second type, or a combination of both types (*see* pp. 16—17). With one or two exceptions, it was not thought likely that these men would be rapidly fit for full service, and so they were fitted with trusses or invalided home, according to the severity of the condition. In addition to ventral, umbilical, and femoral hernias, there were inguinal hernias of all degrees of severity. Many were middle-aged men from labour battalions who had worn trusses for many years, and who required new trusses in place of old and worn-out appliances. In all, during the year 1916, 147 cases of inguinal hernia were treated by removal of the sac without opening up the inguinal canal, in the manner described in the last chapter. In this series the modification in which the conjoined tendon is stitched to Poupart's ligament was not employed.

Some account of this series of cases would appear to be of interest for two reasons. In the first place, there is the question of the immediate results in a series of operations on "clean" cases in a hospital primarily intended for wounds, most of which, as is well known, were in a highly septic condition. I must admit that I regarded the prospect with some anxiety. A special operating room was set aside for these cases, with separate instruments, dressings and appliances. These operations were not performed when active fighting was in progress, for then the entire accommodation of the hospital was required for wounded men, including the special theatre and instruments. After such a period, before being used for "clean" cases, the operating room was thoroughly cleaned out and all instruments, etc., sterilised before again being set apart for this purpose.